

UNCLASSIFIED

Department of State

TELEGRAM

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ACTION MA-85

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INFO OCT-81 ARA-10 10-13 150-88 CA-81 AID-85 EB-88  
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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6433  
INFO USMISSION GENEVA

BUENOS AIRES 5384

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: IRCR, AR, SHUM, SREF  
SUBJECT: INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS APPEAL FOR SUPPORT  
FOR ARGENTINE PROGRAM

REF: A) GENEVA 9935; B) GENEVA 10238

1. I URGE THE DEPARTMENT'S SUPPORT FOR THE RED CROSS INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE'S HUMANITARIAN EFFORTS IN ARGENTINA. THE ICRC REPORTS TO US THAT, AFTER A STORMY BEGINNING, IT HAS REACHED AGREEMENT WITH THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT TO ALLOW THE ICRC FULL PRIVATE AND FREE ACCESS TO "NON-CRIMINAL PRISONERS" (I.E., POLITICAL) HELD IN ARGENTINE JAILS, AS WELL AS THE RIGHT TO MAKE REPEATED VISITS TO PRISONS AND PERMISSION TO DISTRIBUTE SUPPLIES AND FUNDS TO DESTITUTE DETAINEES AND THEIR FAMILIES. THE RED CROSS' ROLE IN TRYING TO IMPROVE THE PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH "NONCRIMINAL PRISONERS" ARE HELD IS A VITAL HUMANITARIAN EFFORT WHICH DESERVES OUR FULL SUPPORT.

2. THE RED CROSS HAS BEGIN TO HAVE ACCESS TO POLITICAL PRISONERS BEING HELD AT THE DISPOSITION OF MILITARY AUTHORITY ("DAM") IN REGULAR PENAL INSTITUTIONS WHOSE DETENTION IS NOT REGISTERED OR OFFICIALLY ACKNOWLEDGED BY GOA. SO FAR, THE ICRC HAS SEEN ABOUT 50 DAM PRISONERS IN CORDOBA, 9 IN RAWSON AND 28 IN RESISTENCIA. (FROM OTHER SOURCES THE EMBASSY HAS LEARNED THAT THERE ARE UNDER 500 UNRECOGNIZED PRISONERS IN ARGENTINE MILITARY CAMPS. WE BELIEVE THAT THIS GROUP IS A MIX OF THOSE RECENTLY DISAPPEARED WHOSE ULTIMATE FATE HAS NOT YET BEEN DETERMINED, COLLABORATORS BEING HELD FOR THEIR SAFETY AND OTHER UNDETERMINED CATEGORIES.)

3. THE ICRC'S CENTRAL TRACING AGENCY'S WORK HERE IS IMPORTANT IN THE EFFORT TO ESTABLISH AN ACCURATE NUMBER OF QUOTE DISAPPEARED UNQUOTE IN ARGENTINA. REFTEL B REPORTS THAT THE CURRENT ICRC FILES CONTAIN MORE THAN 28,000 CARDS OF DETAINED AND MISSING PERSONS IN ARGENTINA. THE ICRC IS PLANNING TO RELEASE SOON A LIST OF 800 WELL-DOCUMENTED DISAPPEARANCE CASES, A NUMBER OF WHOM DID NOT APPEAR IN THE MAY LA PRENSA ADVERTISEMENT.

4. THE ICRC HAS BEEN TRULY RESPONSIVE TO THE NEEDS OF DETAINEES AND THEIR FAMILIES. IN SOME ARMY COMMAND AREAS IN ARGENTINA, THE ICRC REPRESENTATIVE IS THE ONLY CONTACT THAT A PRISONER HAS WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD. SUCH VISITS ARE OF ENORMOUS PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT TO THE DETAINEES, AS WELL AS THEIR FAMILIES. THE ICRC COMMUNICATES WITH EACH FAMILY AS REQUESTED BY THE DETAINEE. IN MANY PRISONS, THE RED CROSS DOCTOR IS THE MAJOR SOURCE OF MEDICAL ASSISTANCE TO THE DETAINEES.

5. THE REGIONAL OFFICE WILL EXPAND ITS ARGENTINE PROGRAM. IN 1978, THE ICRC DELEGATES PLAN TO VISIT THE LARGE

PERISON FACILITIES THREE TIMES AND THE SMALLER FACILITIES TWICE. THE RED CROSS WISHES TO EXPAND ITS FOOD AND RELIEF PROGRAM FOR DESTITUTE DETAINEES, MANY OF WHOM HAVE NO FUNDS TO BUY THE SUPPLEMENTAL FOOD STUFFS IN THOSE PRISONS WHERE SUCH SALES ARE ALLOWED. THE RED CROSS ALSO WISHES TO EXPAND ITS FOOD DELIVERY PROGRAM TO THE FAMILIES OF DETAINEE PRISONERS. BECAUSE OF THE POLITICAL PROBLEMS INVOLVED, THE RED CROSS CANNOT DEPEND ON ITS ARGENTINE

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COUNTERPART NOR ON PRIVATE INDUSTRY FOR SUPPORT IN THIS RELIEF EFFORT.

6. IN SUMMARY, THE RED CROSS EFFORT HERE IS MAKING AN IMPORTANT CONCRETE HUMANITARIAN CONTRIBUTION TO THE ENHANCEMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THIS COUNTRY. REGARDING THE RECOGNITION OF CLANDESTINE PRISONERS, THE RED CROSS' CONTRIBUTION HAS MAJOR POLICY SIGNIFICANCE. WE STRONGLY ENDORSE THE RED CROSS' SPECIAL APPEAL FOR ADDITIONAL FUNDS FOR ITS ARGENTINE PROGRAM AND BELIEVE SIGNIFICANT USG SUPPORT IS WARRANTED. THE AMBASSADOR, WHO IS PRESENTLY IN WASHINGTON, CONCURS.

HIGGINS

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

( ) Release (X) Excise ( ) Deny

Exemption(s): RI

Declassify: (X) In Part ( ) In Full

(X) Classify as ( ) Extend as ( ) Downgrade to  
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